

Akan Malici (2006) Germans as Venutians: The Culture of German Foreign Policy Behavior. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2(1): 37-62.

ABSTRACT

The end of the cold war eliminated many of the external constraints that had straitjacketed German policy during the postwar era. At the same time, unification augmented Germany's already substantial power base. In light of these altered geopolitical circumstances, it was only logical for the dominant theory of security studies, namely realism, to expect a reorientation in German foreign policy behavior towards increased assertiveness. Yet Germany did not embark on power politics or a more assertive foreign policy. This paper argues that German foreign policy behavior in the post cold war era can be ascribed to a foreign policy *culture of reticence* – a culture of restraint and accommodation that can be traced to well-defined sets of fundamental beliefs of German political elites. This paper systematically examines these beliefs in the post cold war era, relates them to foreign policy choices, and concludes with a plea for increased attention to ideational variables.